



CONCEPT NOTE

2nd Memory of the World Global Policy Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for Sustainable Preservation of Documentary heritage

First half of 2021, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

Funding:
Japanese Funds-in-Trust
by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan

1. CONTEXT

UNESCO established the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme¹ in 1992 to increase awareness and protection of the world's documentary heritage and provide for its universal and permanent accessibility. Impetus came originally from a growing awareness of the parlous state of preservation and access to documentary heritage in various parts of the world. War and social upheaval, as well as severe lack of resources, have worsened problems which have existed for centuries – significant collections worldwide have suffered a variety of fates: looting and dispersal, illegal trading, destruction, inadequate housing and funding have all played a part. Much documentary heritage has even vanished forever, and the remaining is endangered. Luckily, there are instances where missing documentary heritage have been rediscovered. Thus, the role of the MoW Programme is to protect documentary heritage, as well as enable networks of experts to exchange information and raise resources for its the preservation.

In 2015, the UNESCO General Conference adopted the [Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage Including in Digital Form](#), which outlines a five-pillar framework for undertaking work on documentary heritage, namely identification, preservation, access, policy and cooperation. In other words, the three-fold objective of identifying documentary heritage, promoting its preservation and enhancing access to it requires an enabling environment of robust policy as well as national and international cooperation. Given the intergovernmental focus of the Recommendation, it is important to link it to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (SDGs), particularly the latter's **SDG 4** ("Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"), target 7², **SDG 11** ("Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"), target 4³, and **SDG 16** ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"), target 10⁴.

With this objective in mind, UNESCO, through its **MoW Programme**, started coordinating a series of **Global Policy Forums** (GPF) supported by **Japanese Funds-in-Trust** (JFIT) as a part of a three-year project on "Preservation of Documentary Heritage Through Policy Development and Capacity-Building", focusing on strategically important aspects for policy advocacy of the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage.

The first GPF took place on **11 December 2018** at UNESCO Headquarters and **focused on disaster risk reduction as a preventive or preservation strategy for documentary heritage.**

¹ See also UNESCO website – <https://en.unesco.org/programme/mow>

² "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development"

³ "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage"

⁴ "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements"

The Forum gathered more than 60 experts from all over the world, including those from **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** and **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**. It drew attention to the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) and focused on three specific contexts of policy conception, implementation and evaluation:

1. Safeguarding/rescuing/restoring damaged documentary heritage;
2. Documenting disaster through research, awareness raising and community engagement, and
3. Deploying an interdisciplinary approach towards preservation efforts for documentary heritage.

[The final report of the first GPF](#) is available on the UNESCO MoW website. As a tool for sustainable preservation of documentary heritage, it supports discussions on the need for effective national and international policy frameworks on disaster risk reduction.

Following the success of the 1st GPF, UNESCO is organizing its [2nd MoW Global Policy Forum on “Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for Sustainable Preservation of Documentary Heritage”](#) in the first half of 2021 at UNESCO Headquarters to specify an **Action Framework** for national memory institutions, bringing together the deliberations of the first and now second edition of the Forum.

2. FORUM OBJECTIVES

In the **2nd Global Policy Forum**, we aim to build the momentum generated during the maiden meeting and articulate a clear and coherent action framework enabling national stakeholders to incorporate the principles and strategies of disaster risk reduction and management into their preservation plans for documentary heritage. In this regard, the Forum will aim to:

1. **INCREASE** participants’ knowledge and understanding of disaster risk reduction and management as a strategy for preserving documentary heritage and memory institutions themselves, also taking into account the emergence of COVID-19 in the early part of 2020 as a global public health risk;
2. **PROMOTE** interdisciplinary dialogue and **BUILD** consensus on national and international cooperation through the exchange of information and experiences among memory institutions on documentary heritage preservation through disaster risk reduction strategies and practices;
3. **ANALYZE** and **PROPOSE** key strategic activities to be implemented by the MoW Programme in support of national actions in this regard;

4. **STRENGTHEN** the emerging global partnership on disaster risk reduction as a strategy to insure documentary heritage preservation and accessibility;
5. **DEFINE** and **LAUNCH** an Action Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for Preservation of Documentary Heritage at the national level;

This second edition of the GPF has been impacted by COVID-19, resulting in its postponement to 2021. Originally, it was planned to be held in May 2020, then October 2020. Accordingly, taking into account this global public health risk, the 2nd Global Policy Forum will also provide an opportunity to analyze **the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on documentary heritage**, in addition to highlighting **COVID-19 responses by memory institutions**. Against this background and amidst this global health crisis, documentary heritage came to the fore as an important resource to provide a historical perspective on how governments, their citizens and the international community have addressed pandemics in the past. Memory institutions, including national archives, libraries, museums, as well as educational and research bodies, have recorded the decisions and actions being made which will help future generations to understand the extent of the pandemic and its impact on societies.

UNESCO, through the MoW Programme, stands ready to **support all Member States** who wish to preserve official records related to COVID-19 within the framework of the **UNESCO 2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form**.

More information of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on documentary heritage can be found in a [statement published in March 2020](#)⁵, co-signed by UNESCO and its partners.

Finally, this 2nd GPF will host an **exhibition** dedicated to the work of institutions and organisations mainly involved in the disaster risk reduction for preservation of documentary heritage. Exhibitors already include: Memory institutions and universities in Japan, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), IFLA⁶, French National Commission for UNESCO, and others.

⁵ Turning the threat of COVID-19 into an opportunity for greater support to documentary heritage

⁶ International Federation of Library Associations

3. EXPECTED RESULTS

This Forum aspires to achieve the following expected results:

- Memory institutions develop enough awareness of disaster risk reduction and management as a strategy for national preservation of documentary heritage;
- The Action Framework will serve as an opportunity for enhancing national and international collaboration on the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage in line with the 2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form;
- The Action Framework provides a coherent set of activities through which the MoW Programme will give further support to memory institutions in implementing national actions.



4. TOPICS OF THE FORUM

DAY 1

SESSION 1

Key Issues for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for Preservation of Documentary Heritage

- Key findings from a UNESCO preliminary survey on heritage at risk;
- Safeguarding/rescuing/restoring damaged documentary heritage;
- Documenting disaster through research, awareness raising and community engagement;
- Disaster risk reduction as a strategy for interdisciplinary preservation approaches towards documentary heritage.

SESSION 2

Overview of Global, Regional and National Activities and Issues

1/ Global Overview

- Disaster risk reduction, documentary heritage and public health: overview of COVID-19 responses by memory institutions and implications for the future of documentary heritage preservation;
- Outcome report of the UNESCO virtual policy dialogue on “Documentary heritage at risk: policy gaps in digital preservation”;
- Magnetic Tape Alert Project;
- Sustainable information on nuclear waste as disaster prevention: opportunities for participation by the MoW Programme.

2/ Regional Overview

- Asia-Pacific Region;
- Latin America and the Caribbean Region;
- Sub-Saharan African Region;
- Arab Region.

3/ National Overview

- Preservation of documentary heritage at risk in Curaçao;
- Heritage rescue and disaster documenting in Japan;
- Disaster risk reduction, preservation and digitization of archives in India;
- Preservation of documentary heritage at risk in SIDS and LDCs.

SESSION 3
**Towards the MoW Action Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for
Preservation of Documentary Heritage**

DAY 2

SESSION 4
Group Discussions for the Action Framework

- Group A: Role of National and Regional Committees
- Group B: Role of IAC Sub-Committee and Memory Institutions
- Group C: Role of UN and Various Stakeholders

SESSION 5
Wrap Up of the Group Discussions

- Report of the summary of the group discussions

SESSION 6
Global Policy Forum Action Framework

- Presentation of key elements of the Action Framework

More information about the topics which will be discussed during the Forum will be provided as part of the Provisional Programme.

5. PARTICIPANTS

For this second edition of the MoW Global Policy Forum, UNESCO expects to organize the event as a hybrid, incorporating physical and virtual participation, reflecting the changing context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants will include:

- Experts on documentary heritage, disaster risk reduction, and related fields;
- Representatives from memory institutions;
- Policy-makers and Member States;
- Key implementation partners including ICA, IFLA, CCAAA⁷, ICOM⁸, ICCROM⁹, Blue Shield, ICDH¹⁰, ICHARM¹¹, and others;
- MOWCAP¹², MOWLAC¹³, ARCMOW¹⁴, and UNESCO Field offices;
- MoW National Committees and National commissions for UNESCO, and;
- Various stakeholders (international organizations, academia, NGOs, media, private sector, etc.).

The participants are encouraged to play a catalytic role with other stakeholders in their own region/country.

6. ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

An Organizing Committee, made up of the following, is driving preparations for the Forum:

- Fackson BANDA, Chief of the Documentary Heritage Unit (Memory of the World Programme), UNESCO HQ (Paris): f.banda@unesco.org;
- Kenji TAMURA, Documentary Heritage Unit (Memory of the World Programme, UNESCO, HQ (Paris): k.tamura@unesco.org;
- Raji PAJANY, Documentary Heritage Unit (Memory of the World Programme), UNESCO, HQ (Paris): r.pajany@unesco.org;

⁷ The Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations

⁸ International Council of Museums

⁹ The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

¹⁰ International Centre for Documentary Heritage

¹¹ International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management

¹² The Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific

¹³ UNESCO Memory of the World Register for Latin America and the Caribbean

¹⁴ The African Regional Committee for Memory of the World